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ABSTRACT

A list of behavioral objectives to be achieved by the Kalamazoo school system was drawn up for the period May 1, 1972 to June 30, 1973. Items in the list were designed to show the top priority directions for the school system and to serve as accountability criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the present administration. The objectives address themselves particularly to modification of staff patterns, implementation of accountability models, improvement of classroom learning environments, and other areas. (Author/WM)

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KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent

July 10, 1972

1972-73 PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At the meeting of June 19, 1972 the Board of Education adopted goals of education for the Kalamazoo Public Schools. These goals were general and indicative of the student needs which must be served if the school system is to meet its ultimate obligation of helping the young people of this community to acquire the basic skills and understandings necessary to live full and productive lives as adults. Of course the real test of the success of this school system will be the type of community Kalamazoo becomes over the next 20 years, but we cannot wait that long to identify strengths and weaknesses of our current educational programs. We must have more specific intermediate objectives related to our long-term goals but which are amenable to current measurement and evaluation. Therefore, this administration has developed the following list of behavioral objectives to be achieved by the school system during the time period May 1, 1972 to June 30, 1973. Items in the list are designed to show the top priority directions in which the school system will be moving during the next year and to serve as accountability criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the present administration. We recognize that the achievement of any of these objectives will require extensive and enthusiastic cooperation from all staff members throughout the system, from students, and from other groups in the community. In that sense the entire community should receive the credit if and when these objectives are met. However, in an organization such as the Kalamazoo Public Schools it is necessary for someone to play a leadership role by setting objectives and then being willing to be held accountable for the extent to which these objectives are met. The specific objectives for which this administration expects to be held accountable are listed below with accompanying narrative. Furthermore, the administration expects to be held accountable with respect to other critical and presently unanticipated matters which may emerge throughout the school year.

I. Modification of Staffing Patterns

We have spent a considerable amount of time during the past two months studying staffing patterns throughout the school system. The purpose of this study was not necessarily to reduce administrative costs but to develop the most efficient organizational structure possible given the needs of the school system, the objectives presented herein, and the preferences of various subgroups within the system. As a result of this study several staffing patterns have been changed. A reorganization chart with related discussion will be available in the Office of the Superintendent. Specific objectives related to modification of staffing patterns are:

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A. Develop more efficient central office administrative structure

The new structure will meet both instructional and operational needs more effectively and at a lower cost than the old one. It will have eight fewer positions yielding a net savings to the school system in excess of $100,000 for the 1972-73 academic year over what the cost would have been under the old organization.

B. Clarify roles and relationships of personnel throughout the system

In the past there has been some confusion in terms of certain line-staff relationships reflecting uncertainty about levels of decision making. There has often been lack of understanding between building principals and central office personnel regarding authority for certain kinds of decisions. Such relationships will be clarified so that the channels of communication and lines of authority throughout the system are clearly understood by all involved.

C. Increase autonomy at the building level

One of the primary objectives of this administration is to decentralize the overall operation so that there is more autonomy at the building level. This increased autonomy will result in more building level decision making with respect to both instruction and operations. However, at all times building principals will be expected to operate within the goals and policies of the Board of Education and within the performance objectives and administrative procedures of the Superintendent's Office.

D. Increase instructional leadership role for teachers

It is felt that the instructional leadership skills of teachers are not properly utilized in most educational systems. In an attempt to begin to provide a more challenging career for the professional teacher we are modifying staffing patterns such that teachers will have increased responsibility for the instructional process by placing teachers in instructional leadership roles. A first step toward achieving this objective will be to use instructional specialists and department heads as outlined in the organizational chart for 1972-73.

E. Continue involvement of students, parents, and other school patrons

This objective will be achieved through utilization of groups representative of students, parents, and the community at large.

II. Implementation of Accountability Models

This administration is committed to increased accountability wherein school patrons are given comprehensive feedback regarding the educational return for their tax dollar, student performance levels are ascertained, and differentiation is made between levels of productivity of all personnel throughout the system. Specific objectives related to increased accountability are shown below.

A. Utilize management by objectives

This administration will implement management techniques designed to achieve the objectives presented in this document. Personnel throughout the system will be asked to develop early in the fall specific performance objectives which they hope to achieve throughout the school year. For example, early in the fall building principals will be asked to submit to the central office a set of objectives which they will be working toward for the coming year. Some of the objectives will be related to the system-wide objectives of this administration while others will reflect the personal interests of the individual responding. In all cases these objectives will provide direction for the individuals involved, they will help personnel in the central office assess commitments related to system-wide objectives, and they will serve as criteria for evaluating productivity.

B. Increase evaluation

It is important to measure the outcomes of our various programs and practices. The purpose of such evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current programs so that we may make appropriate changes in a continuous effort to improve the quality of education provided by this school system. This evaluation will be achieved through our research and development unit described in the organizational chart for 1972-73.

C. Compile unit records for each student in the system

In order to assess student needs and student growth we will be compiling a unit record amenable to data processing for each student in the system. The purpose of these data will be to provide teachers with feedback regarding student performance levels early in the fall and later in the spring so that there will be an accurate record of student growth with respect to the several objectives of our schools.

D. Develop personnel skills training programs

There appears to be a significant gap between the experiences most teachers had at their teacher preparation institutions and the skills required to function in the classrooms of this community. We will attempt to bridge this gap through extensive personnel skills development. Our program will be based on use of information in the student unit records discussed above. Early in the fall teachers will be made aware of the performance levels of students in their class as well as reactions of relevant groups of students to the classroom environment. This information will be used as feedback in training sessions designed to help teachers become more effective in the improvement of student learning.

E. Increased use of parent-teacher conferences

The extensive data on student performances to be compiled in some cases may not be amenable to a brief reporting on mailed report cards. To get the best results from our extensive data on student

growth, the data must be shared in a one-to-one basis between parents and teachers. It is our intent to replace some of the current grade reporting practices with parent-teacher conferences to be conducted at least two times per year.

III. Improvement of Classroom Learning Environments

We believe the classroom environments throughout the system must be conducive to learning and we are committed to work toward achieving that end. In general we believe that classrooms should be well organized while at the same time have a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

A. Increase emphasis on academic achievement

While recognizing that academic achievement is not the only objective of this school system it nevertheless is a very important one. If students are to grow to their fullest capacity they must have the basic academic skills requisite for that growth. It is the intent of this administration to influence and coordinate activities such that academic achievement on a system-wide basis will be significantly raised. It should be noted that this administration recognizes the importance of student attitudes toward themselves and others and that such attitudinal growth will continue as an objective of this administration.

B. Increase individualization

It is important that students at all ability levels are challenged to a high degree. We feel this can be achieved by allowing students to progress at their own rate and challenging them to do so.

C. Reduce violence and student unrest

Every child has a right to attend school without threat to safety or fear of physical violence. Programs will be designed to work with students such that the type of self-defeating behaviors contributing to violence and unrest may be eliminated.

D. Work toward elimination of drug problem

Reports indicate that there is a serious drug problem in this community, and we believe the school system has an obligation to deal with it. It is our intent to reduce the use of drugs by our students through appropriate educational and rehabilitation programs and by working with community and law enforcement agencies.

The student services unit described in the 1972-73 organizational chart is designed to meet the above needs regarding violence, unrest, drugs, and other behavioral problems.

E. Emphasize career education

We will attempt to help young people throughout the system become more aware of career opportunities. This effort will be directed toward elementary youngsters as well as secondary.

IV. Other Areas

A. Implement preschool program

The developmental period between 10 months and four years may be the most critical time in a child's life. We will attempt to improve the learning environment of very young children in underprivileged homes by implementing a preschool program designed to improve parental awareness and involvement with respect to the learning and developmental needs of infants.

B. Develop and implement a plan for the most effective use of old Central High School

We have been in contact with several interested groups who have recommended various uses of old Central: recreation, community education, meeting rooms, and storage. It is our intent to gather these recommendations and recommend a plan that will most effectively utilize this building.

C. Develop alternate models of education based on exemplary programs and practices

A number of students in our school system are not responding to present school programs and practices. We will be investigating alternative methods and plan to implement some of these programs during the next school year.

D. Improve the lunchroom atmosphere

There have been concerns about problems in some of the lunchrooms in the system. An initial attempt to improve this situation will be to shorten the lunch period.

E. Improve transportation schedules

At the present time our transportation schedules are creating unnecessary problems with respect to the length of time certain children are away from home and with respect to the length of lunch periods. We will attempt to modify transportation patterns so that daily schedules are more consistent with student growth and developmental needs.

F. Improve building maintenance

For the past few years little has been done in the area of building maintenance. This has contributed to a poor appearance for many of our buildings. We will have more complete and efficient maintenance services and programs during the next two years.

G. Improve general accounting procedures

During the coming year we will move toward a general accounting system based on Program Planning Budgeting Systems (PPBS) utilizing electronic data processing. This system should provide a clearer picture of building and program costs while enabling us to better perform business functions on schedule.

H. Improve overall climate of the Kalamazoo community

Some citizens feel that this community is now experiencing some problems related to general climate and image. The school system did not create all of these problems and cannot be expected to solve them by itself. However, we think the school system, working with the broader community, can and should make an important contribution. In that sense we hope to have a positive effect on the overall climate of this community. Primary areas of concern which are measurable include property values, exodus, and attitudes of school patrons.

Of course many educational leaders throughout the school system have specific objectives of their own. We will make every effort to encourage this kind of initiative on the part of our staff and to work with them in the achievement of such objectives.

Finally, we welcome written feedback from all members of the community to this list of objectives as well as suggestions for additional concerns. We will make every effort to incorporate such feedback into our overall planning.